ESSENTIALS OF ISLAM Series

AL ZAKAT

"THE POOR DUE"

By

ABD EL-RAZZAK NOFAL



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ESSENTIALS OF ISLAM

SERIES

«AL-ZAKAT»

THE POOR DUE

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ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book is the first in a series designed to state as briefly as possible the essentials of Islam.

No questions of history or philosophy have been raised or discussed. The plain truths about Islam have been stated in a clear and concise manner.

It is hoped that people with very little knowledge of Islam will find in this series a direct introduction to the essentials of Islam. It will help even those who want to be initiated into the study of Islam.

SHAWKY SUKKARY

"IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE BENEFICENT THE MERCIFUL."

"The Believers, those who humble themselves in their prayers, who turn away from vanities who fulfil the obligations of Zakât — they must win through".

"The translation of the Qurânic verses cited here is a mere interpretation of the meaning."

"AL - ZAKAT"

THE POOR-DUE

The Third Pillar of Islam :

Almighty Allah imposed Zakât on all Muslims and gave them orders regards regarding it in many verses of the Qurân. For example :

"And be steadfast in prayers, pay the Zakât, and whatever good you send forth before you for your souls, you shall find it with God, for God sees well what you do"

This mention of Zakât in the Qurân occurs in some 32 verses. In most of them it is coupled with prayers, and this emphasises the importance which the Qurân places upon Zakât.

God has promised all who fulfill Zakât great reward. This is illustrated in verses like :

"And establish regular prayers and pay the Zakât and loan to God a goodly loan. Whatever good you send forth before you for your souls, you shall find it in God's Presence, better and greater in reward...

What better reward is there than God's mercy ?

As for those who refrain from charity and who do not practise Zakât, their punishment will be severe ·

"And woe to those who join gods with God... who do not pay the Zakât and do not believe in the Hereafter". Likewise :

"Woe to the worshippers who are neglectful of their prayers, those who would be seen (at worship), but abstain from good works". And also :

"And those who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in the way of God, announce unto them a most grievous penalty... On the Day when it will (all) be heated in the fire of Hell, and their foreheads, sides and backs will be branded therewith (and they will be told) : This is what you hoarded up for yourselves ; taste of that which you hoarded."

Treasure here means wealth out of which a certain amount is not dedicated for charity (Zakât), even if it is put away and not invested.

As for the wealth upon which Zakât is paid, it is not considered 'treasure' even if it is put away :

"And let not those who covetously hoard up that which God has given them of His bounty think that it is better for them — nay it will be the worse for them. That which they have hoarded avariciously will be as a collar on their necks on the Day of Judgement".

Zakât is also of the conditions for the acceptance of the repentance of pagans. It is a condition for abstaining from waging war on them, as the Qurân specifies :

"But when the sacred months have passed, then fight and slay the idolaters where you find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every

ambush. But if they repent, and establish regular prayers and practice Zakât then let them go their way, for God is Forgiving, Merciful".

Similarly Zakât is also proof that pagans have embraced Islam, and brotherhood towards them is the duty of all other Muslims, as the Qurânic verse states :

"But if they repent, establish regular prayers, and pay the Zakât they are your brethren in faith".

Muhammad (Prayers and God's Peace be upon him) advised the practice of Zakât in many of his sayings. For example, it is related of him that he addressed the people saying :

"O people, He (Gabriel) came to me from my Lord whilst I was asleep and said to me : — O Muhammad, those who pray but do not practice Zakât, their prayers are not acceptable, and those who practise Zakât but do not pray, their Zakât is not acceptable. He who witholds Zakât is on the Day of Judgement equal to he who has not practised it".

Muhammad also mentions Zakât in one of his sayings as one of the five pillars of Islam : *"Islam is built upon five pillars — testimony of belief in one God and Muhammad as His prophet, prayers, Zakât, fasting in the month of Ramadan and the Pilgrimage to Mecca".*

For that reason, when Muhammad sent his envoys to preach Islam, he advised them to call people to worship God and then to pay Zakât, taking from the rich to give to the poor.

He also advised Muaz when he sent him to Yemen saying :

"You are going to a people who have a Scripture. So call them first to worship God; and when they have acknowledged God tell them that God imposes Zakât on them, taken from the rich and returned to the poor. If they obey accept it from them, and heed the plea of the down-trodden, for between it and God there is no barrier.

He, who refuses the obligation of Zakât is an unbeliever who must repent or be killed like the one who apostatizes. Abu Bakr (the Grace of God be upon him) killed those who apostatized when they refused to pay Zakât and said : "By God, were they to hold back a due which they used to pay to the Messenger of God, I would wage holy war against them". And he ordered war to be waged against them saying : "I shall fight all those who make a distinction between prayer and Zakât."

CLASSIFICATION OF ZAKAT

Zakât is divided into two main categories :

1. — Zakât of al-Fitr (i.e. the breaking of the fast at the end of Ramadan. It is also referred to as the Zakât of the body.

2. — Zakât of wealth.

Zakât of al-Fitr :

Muhammad ordered that this kind of charity should

be observed in the same year in which the fasting during Ramadan was imposed.

A day, or two days preceding al-Fitr the Prophet addressed the Muslims saying :

"Give for charity, be it corn or dates ; give according to what you are, free or slave, young or old."

It is also related by al-Bukhari and Muslim that the Prophet (Prayer and God's Peace be upon him) imposed the charity of al-Fitr after Ramadan, a measure of dates or barley on all Muslims, slave or free, young or old, male or female.

THOSE WHO HAVE TO PRACTISE ZAKAT AL-FITR

Zakât al-Fitr does not become nullified if one is a Muslim, provided the Muslim is free and possesses the amount of Zakât after covering the expenses of food for himself, and those whom he feeds for a day and a night; together with the expenditure which he incurs in relation to wife, son, servants and those whom he has to provide for such as parents and others.

Its amount :

The amount is either a measure of dates, or barley, or rice, or corn, or anything else edible that can be used for food, from each individual.

If Zakât is to consist of wheat it is half that for each person. A man must consciously intend Zakât, since without intent it is not valid.

Zakât in cash varies in estimation according to the current value of money at the time of Zakât.

The Hanafi sect allows the person to pay in cash for Zakât, indeed, it considers that this is preferable because it is more useful to the poor, since they know what they need most — it might be food and it might be medicine.

The time to practise Zakât al-Fitr :

All the learned have agreed that the time to practise it is the end of Ramadan. They disagree upon the time of day, whether it is to be sunset on the day preceding al-Fitr or dawn on the day of the feast.

One thing is certain, and that is al-Zakât has to be fulfilled before going out to the prayers.

Ibn Omar said : "The Prophet ordered us to fulfil Zakât al-Fitr before going out to prayers".

It is also permitted to offer it a day or two before that date. Others even say that one is allowed to do so from the beginning of Ramadan. It is definitely not permitted after the day of the feast. It is then not Zakât but Sadaqa (alms).

It is related, through Ibn Abbas, that Prophet Muhammad (Prayers and God's Peace be upon him) ordered Zakât al-Fitr as purification for the one who fasts from vain things, and as a help and sustenance to the poor.

He who practises it before the prayer, his Zakât is acceptable, but for he who fulfils it after the prayer it is simply Sadaqa (alms-giving).

Zakât al-Fitr does not become nullified if one is late in fulfilling it — it is still a duty for all Muslims.

A man must fulfil it somehow, or else his account will be settled in relation to it on the day when no repentance is accepted and no money is available.

Use of Zakât al-Fitr :

It has many uses and benefits for those who fulfill it and for society as a whole.

The one who fulfills it is purified through it from that which might have spoiled his fasting, such as vain acts or unseemly speech which he is required to abstain from, as he abstains from eating or drinking, or lusts of the flesh — and there is hardly a person who is not open to these — so that Zakât is a purification to those who fast. Perhaps that is what is meant by the saying of Muhammad :

"Fasting in the month of Ramadan lies suspended between the earth and Heaven. It is only-raised (to Heaven) by Zakât of al-Fitr".

It is also a duty binding upon every single person falling under the guidance of the faster, young or old, free or slave. It is thus the Zakât of the body, as it is the Zakât of al-Fitr. From this deduction, comes the hope that to God Almighty it is a means of preserving the bodies of all who fulfill it, and of purifying and improving their bodies :

That as what is meant by His words :

"Of their good take alms, so that you may purify and improve them thereby".

As for benefits to society, we all realise that it (al-Zakât) provides for the poor in a way that makes humility unnecessary on that day. That is explained by the Prophet's saying :

"Relieve them of the necessity of going around (looking for alms) on this day."

Another benefit to society is that all, poor and rich alike, feel the general joy of that day. It is not for the rich only.

Also, the poor person who receives alms feels rich on that day by receiving them. He, therefore, seeks ways of practising charity himself and that day he feels that he too is a giver and takes delight in giving.

He becomes accustomed to the feeling, albeit rare, that he is one to do good and not to have good done to him.

Its condition :

To fulfil this kind of Zakât a person must be :

1) A Muslim, for Zakât is not a duty for the non-Muslim.

2) Free, for slaves are not supposed to pay it.

3) To have reached majority. It is not binding upon the minor ; it is binding upon his wealth and it is the duty of his guardian to extract it from his (the minor's) wealth.

4) Sane, for Zakât is not a duty for the insane. It is, nevertheless, the duty of his guardian to produce it from the person's wealth. It is thus enforceable upon the wealth of the insane.

5) He must have the total (in terms of wealth) which entails payment of Zakât.

6) This total should have been his for specified time in order to justify Zakât i.e. for one year or 12 lunar months.

This does not apply to produce or fruits of the land. The time to fulfill the Zakât on these is the time of harvesting, when the fruits and produce are fully ripe. This is specified in the Qurân :

"Eat of their fruit in their season, but render the dues that are proper on the day that the harvest is gathered".

KINDS OF WEALTH ON WHICH AL-ZAKAT IS LEVIED

Livestock, such as camels, cows, buffaloes, sheep and goats. Other kinds of livestock are not eligible for Zakât unless they are used as merchandise; then the Zakât for trade applies.

Zakât is imposed on the above animals on condition that they graze the common pasture. They are considered

inexpensive and also useful, for they breed, their flesh is edible and their milk is drunk. They do not cost the person who owns them much.

On the other hand, if the animal is stall-bred then no Zakât is due because of the expense and effort involved in feeding it. But in the case of the working animal, since it produces by its work in ploughing or irrigation, then Zakât is due — it is as if Zakât on agricultural produce were to include working animals.

Zakât of Camels :

This applies in excess of five camels. If a person owns that number, he should pay Zakât at the rate of a sheep for the five camels, and so for each five up to a total of 25 camels, for which he must give a year old she-camel with Zakât.

If he owns 36, he should include a two-year old she-camel.

If his wealth amounts to 46 camels, he should include a three-year old she-camel. If he owns 61, he should include .(with Zakât) a four-year old she-camel. If he has 76, he should include 2 two-year old she-camels, amongst Zakât.

If he owns 91 camels, he should include 2 three-year old she-camels and similarly up to 120. If more, a two-year old she-camel for each additional 40 and a three-year old she-camel for each additional 50 camels.

Zakât of Cows :

It starts with he who has thirty. At that point he should give one that is a year old. If the number is forty, he should give one that is two years old. If he has more than forty, he should give one that is a year old for every thirty, and one that is two years old for every forty.

Zakât of Sheep and Goats :

It starts with the owning of forty sheep. If a person owns forty, he should give one female from whatever the kind may be. If sheep it is to be a sheep, if goats a goat, if mixed sheep and goats then it is taken from which ever is most numerous. If the total reaches 121, then two females must be included, and if it reaches 201 then three must be included, and also one for each hundred in excess of that.

Zakât of Gold and Silver :

Zakât is imposed on gold and silver. If a person owns 20 mithqal of gold he is liable to Zakât.

The mithqal equals a dinar which in turn equals $4^1/_4$ gms. The amount of gold liable to Zakât is 85 gms: Zakât for this amount is $2\,^1/_2\%$ of its value.

As for silver, 'zakât starts at 200 dirhams, which equal five ounces or 591 gms of silver. 'zakât paid for this amount is also $2\,^1/_2\%$.

There is one condition for Zakât of gold and silver — the owner should have the above mentioned amounts for a year, at least. It is exempt from Zakât if it is in the

shape of Jewelry used for ornamentation, except with the Hanafi sect. The amount for the Zakât of gold and silver is a quarter of the tenth ; that is 2½% of its value.

This tax also includes any dues from trade. It is then one quarter of a tenth of the capital used in trade.

Zakât of Produce and Fruits :

Zakât is also due on fruits and produce. It is imposed on seeds grain, dates and grapes, if the amount harvested equals 4 Egyptian irdabbs and 2 kaylas. An irdabb equals about 330 pounds, and a kayla is about 28 pounds. The amount which it is necessary to pay equals one half of a tenth if the owner uses machinery to till and irrigate his land, which might involve him in some expenses. If he does not use machinery, but depends on his own efforts for tilling and on rain for irrigation, or on small canals, then the amount should reach one tenth of the crop or harvest.

THAT WHICH IS EXEMPT FROM ZAKAT

The following are exempt from Zakât :

Private abode, personal clothing, furniture, weapons, animals used for transport, jewels such as pearls, rubies, etc... which are not traded in, books that are not for trade, equipment used for handicraft from which the owner earns his living, such as a hammer, etc.

THE UTILISATION OF ZAKAT

The Qurân has defined the persons to receive alms in the following words :

"Alms are for the poor and the needy and those employed to administer the (funds), for those whose hearts have been recently reconciled, and those in slavery, and in the debt, and in the way of God, and for the wayfarer".

The poor (al-fuqara) are those who do not own enough to be liable to Zakât and those who do not have enough to carry them through the year.

As for the needy (al-masâkin), there is a difference of opinion as to whether they or the poor (al-fuqarâ) are worse off. The needy it is said, are those who own nothing and owing to age or sickness cannot earn anything.

Those employed to administer the funds are the persons appointed by the head of government. Amongst them are labourers and public officials.

All these are paid according to their respective work.

Those whose hearts have been recently reconciled were the rich chiefs of tribes whom the head of state thought it necessary to placate for the good of Islam. The Prophet (God's Prayer and Peace be upon him) distributed amongst their like some alms and booty in order to ensure special aims in spreading Islam, or to prevent any harm being done to the faithful. They were exempt from Zakât at the time of Abu Bakr, on the advice of Omar, when he gave him to understand that the concessions granted to them were temporary, in accordance with the needs of Islam ; and God strengthened Islam and there was no need to placate them. Some of the learned think that it is the right of the head of state to use placatory measures till the Day of Judgement; and that if he considers it of use to spend some of Zakât upon

those whose hearts are reconciled, he is allowed to do this in the service of Islam.

Those in slavery — that is the freeing of the slave and the raising of their status — although slavery no longer exists.

Those in debt are those who have been weighed down by their debts and they cannot pay — provided that the cause of debt is not any vice, or mishandling of money.

In the way of God means those who fight on a raid or in the Holy War in the way of God; and similarly all that is beneficial to God's religion.

The way-farer is the stranger who is far away from his home.

STIPULATIONS GOVERNING THE RECEIPT OF ZAKAT

Those who receive Zakât in any of the above categories, in addition to the special stipulations for each category, must be Muslim, free, not of Bani Hashim, or of Bani Abdel Muttalib, or a slave of either. He should have reached majority, have full use of his intellect, and be wise in disposing of it.

And the eight categories can be thought of together in general terms, unless the head of state makes a distinction between them.

Zakât should be limited to the town or place of the funds.

The intention to pay is imperative, although making it public is not necessary for that implies the hurting of the feelings of the poor person and bringing home to him a hateful fact — his poverty and humiliation.

THE RIGHT OF THE STATE IN COLLECTING ZAKAT AND DISPENSING IT

In many verses the Qurân mentions that charity is a duty that must be fulfilled :

"And render to the kindred their due rights, as (also) to those in want, and to the wayfarer: but squander not (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift."

"So give what is due to the kindred, the needy; and the wayfarer. That is best for those who seek the countenance of God ; and it is they who will prosper. That which Ye lay out for increase through the property of (other) people, will have no increase with God: but that which Ye lay out for Zakât, seeking the countenance of God, (will increase). It is these who will get a recompense multiplied".

"As to the righteous, they will be in the midst of gardens and springs, taking joy in the things which their Lord gives them because before that they lived a good life — they were in the habit of sleeping but little by night, and in the hours of early dawn they (were found) praying for forgiveness, and in their wealth and possessions (was remembered) the right of the (needy) one who asked, and he who was prevented (from asking)..."

"Except those devoted to prayer, those who remain steadfast to their prayer, and those in whose wealth is a recognized right (for the needy), for he who asks and he who is prevented (from asking)."

We all know that rights have to be rendered. To guarantee this rendering the Prophet (The Prayer and Peace of God be upon him) collected alms through those he appointed. The Qurân had decreed that those who collect alms can also receive alms. It is a definite fact that most of the apostates after the death of the Prophet apostatized by refusing to render Zakât decreed upon them.

The fact that Abu Bakr issued orders that they should be fought confirms that it is a duty of the state to collect Zakât and enforce it upon all who have to render it.

As for the distinction of Zakât, it is known that the Prophet (the Prayer and Peace of God be upon him) used to distribute it himself to Muslims each according to his need, so that the utmost benefit is gained for the good of them all, as individuals and as groups.

This is stated in the verse of the Qurân :

> *"And among them are men who slander thee in the matter of (the distribution of) the alms. If they are given part therefore they are pleased, but if not, behold they are indignant. 'If only they had been content with what God and his Messenger gave them and had said: Sufficient unto us is God ! God and His*

Messenger will soon give us of His bounty; to God do we turn our hopes! That would have been the right course."

This shows that the hypocrites were content only when they received alms, dissatisfied when deprived of them, and that the Prophet dispensed from the Zakât funds himself.

Zakât was one of the main sources of revenue of the Islamic state. The money was spent in accordance with the Qurân on the eight categories mentioned.

For these reasons, it is best to pay Zakât to the state, represented in terms in what it sets up as special institutions for Zakât. This is the best and the most useful way to distribute it, since the present increase in population and their many-sided preoccupations does not give them the chance to know the truth about others in order to decide who is poor, needy, etc. We often come across a person who is able to earn his living, and who does in fact earn his living use roundabout ways to get charity in one way or another. In that way charity is not given to those who deserve it.

As for the state, since it looks after the good of all, and can with all the facilities in hand discriminate between those who deserve charity and those who do not, the investment multiplies the amount in a way that makes the benefit wider and bigger. The industrialization of a country and the growth of its economy is again beneficial to the community in the same sort of way as Zakât. With this the way is opened for the unemployed to find work. It is an obvious fact that unemployment is a reason for poverty, though it is not the main reason.

Again, such a procedure is strengthening to the state itself and it helps to raise its prestige — it is as if good encompasses individual and community alike. The Islamic state was founded on the collection of Zakât through its employees who were appointed for that particular work after the death of the Prophet. The order of Abu Bakr to wage war against the apsotates in his time underlines the fact that the state was founded on the collection of Zakât. This state of things continued throughout the time of Omar. His speech after his succession proves that, for it mentioned wealth in the following way :

"Take it from me that I shall not collect from you more than what is due; this I shall distribute in a just way." This is a confirmation of the necessity of collecting Zakât and dispensing it. This continued to be so throughout the time of Uthman until he was assassinated; then the Muslims quarelled amongst themselves. Some of them paid Zakât to the public treasury.

History relates that Omar Ibn Abdel Aziz used to send his employees to collect Zakât and distribute it. Yahya Ibn Sa'd says of that :

"Omar Ibn Abdel Aziz sent me to collect Zakât from Africa. I did so, then I asked for the poor who should receive it. I did not find any because Omar Ibn Abdel Aziz had made every one rich. I used the money to free some from slavery."

Perhaps the best assurance that the public treasury is the place which has the right of collecting Zakât is the Qurân, when it states that those who administer it have a share in it. Those who administer it are obviously those who collect it, those who are appointed by the state for this purpose.

THE OBJECTS OF ZAKAT

The object of Zakât is the good of the Islamic state, with all its individual members as well as the whole community, and its general welfare.

As for the individuals, Zakât has taken care of the poor and the needy and the wayfarers. As for the community, apart from the fact that the welfare of the individual reflects on the welfare of the community, it has another advantage relating to those who are in debt.

As for the good of the state, this is realized through the insuring of a nobler life for all individuals through the laying aside of a sum of money to be spent in the way of God. It is an obvious fact that the welfare of the Islamic state is assured through the conservation of the religion of God and through those whose hearts are reconciled, who also reap the fruits of charity.

Poverty is definitely the biggest problem to confront the individual during his life time. Most states have to contend with this in varying ways. The poor man who lives in a rich community, the individual members of which do not respond to him by giving to him so that he can live, feels deprived. From this feeling of deprivation is born the hatred of this community and its members. Most of the crimes committed by certain individuals

are due to poverty. When the poor person feels that he is an outcast his hatred for the rich man, who keeps his money back from him, grows. Most of the revolutions that have happened are mainly due to poverty, due to the fact that the poor feel that they are left behind in the cavalcade of society. Even in the international scene, we find that most wars are due to the fact that some states desire to ensure the welfare and prosperity of their peoples by expansion, as well as by raising the economic standard in order to find for the poor the means to live. Most states, however, have resorted to various experiments in the attempt to ensure that their peoples are immune from poverty.

All other systems cannot stand on the same level with the Islamic system, which has laid down true co-operative socialism by means of Zakât, which the person who is able to do so pays a stipulated portion in accordance with what he has — this is true socialism.

And he pays willingly and by choice — this is true cooperation

Zakât is also one way of preventing the spreading of principles that help make the poor grudge the rich their wealth and make them hate society. It is the means of establishing love and friendship amongst people, rich and poor alike, a feeling of co-operative socialism.

The Qurân tells us that people who collect Zakât are entitled also to take a share of it. This is meant to create honesty and integrity and to combat bribery and as an incentive for hard work.

Part of the funds of Zakât are also set aside for those whose hearts are reconciled. This aimed at bringing people together and at preventing any harm to the Muslims.

Those who received Zakât under this heading in the life of the Prophet were prevented from receiving it at the time of Abu Bakr when Omar proclaimed that they had no right to do so, since the pillars of Islam were solidly erected and strengthened — all those who work for the spread of Islam can be considered amongst those whose hearts are reconciled.

Nowadays there is great need to have some of the people whose status and opinion is of weight in the international field on the side of Islam, especially at the present time, since we live in an age of propaganda. This also includes all the ways and means that a state makes use of to propagate Islam outside its recognized domains, such as articles, pamphlets, or communications written by non-Muslims and Muslims alike, to achieve this goal.

Islam also called for the freeing of slaves. For that aim it designated part of the revenue of Zakât to be spent in that direction, so that a free and liberal society be set up.

Another good point in favour of Islam is that it calls for help for those in debt, those who are heavily in debt and are so not because of any vice. There is nothing worse than being in debt, no one more miserable than the person who has lost his wealth because of some misfortune. Such people are deserving of kindness and help. A community that works for the help of the above mentioned is a sound and perfect community. It is the Islamic Community.

Another portion of Zakât is spent in the way of God. By this is meant the strategic military aspect of the defence of Islam.

The wayfarers are those who are far away from their homeland and cannot receive funds from there. Zakât includes them also.

A very important object of Zakât is the moral and psychological satisfaction that the person who pays gets through his fine gesture. He feels that he is contributing to the building of his society and to making its members happy and contented. By so doing he feels that he is freed from anxiety and confusion. Dreisser, the well-known psychological novelist, says :

"If a man wants to extract the utmost joy from life he should work for the joy of others." His joy depends on their joy and the joy of others is also related to his own joy.

Zakât also frees men from the domination of money, this domination that sometimes leads a man to sickness and even to suicide. The amassing of money and miserliness are the first symptoms of this domination. The only active way to combat it is generosity and charity. One sign of this domination upon a man is his turning his back upon an honourable way of life. He neglects his needs and the needs of his family and even of his religion.

An example of that is what happened to Tha'laba Ibn Hatib, who accosted the Apostle (Peace and Prayers of God be upon him) saying :

"Please pray for me so that God may give me wealth". The Apostle replied :

"The little money for which you give thanks is much better than that you cannot manage".

Tha'laba came again asking the Apostle for prayers The Apostle (Peace and Prayers of God be upon him), replied :

"Would you not wish to be like God's Prophet. If I wished the mountains to be transformed into mountains of gold they would become so." Tha'laba replied :

"By God if you pray for me to be given money, I would give everybody his due. The Apostle prayed for him and he became rich in sheep, which grew and matured and became so numerous that al-Madina was crowded with them".

When his fortune multiplied he used to pray at noon and in the afternoon, leaving the other prayers. When it multiplied even more he neglected that too. Then the Apostle, (Peace and Prayers of God be upon him), said :

"Woe to Tha'laba" — And he repeated it three times. Then the verses of the Qurân were revealed :

> *"Amongst them is he who made a covenant with God (saying),*
>
> *"If He bestowed upon us His bounty we will give alms, and be truly amongst those who are righteous, but when He did bestow of His bounty, they became covetous, and turned back (from their covenant averse to its fulfillment). So He has set, as a consequence, hypocrisy in their hearts, until the day when they shall meet Him, because they broke their cove-*

nant with God, and because they lied. Do they not know that God knows both their secret and the thought that they confide and that God knows well all things unseen ?"

When Tha'laba heard of it he went to the Prophet with Zakât. The Prophet (Peace and Prayers of God be upon him), said :

"God has forbidden me to accept it." The Prophet died without accepting it. Abu Bakr and Omar and Uthman followed suit. Tha'laba died during the caliphate of Uthman after being a victim of the domination of money, which prevented him from prayers, and he did not try to pay Zakât until he heard what was revealed in the Qurân concerning him. His Zakât was not accepted. He died and only God knows his punishment.

Zakât is the best safeguard against this domination, which increases with the increase of wealth.

Zakât is not charity in the sense that the word is used nowadays. It is a right of the poor person who feels that it is a sort of tax of brotherhood. It also has the advantage of being paid at a certain fixed time of the year. Only fruit and agricultural produce is exempt from that, for Zakât of fruit is paid as soon as it ripens. This fixed time is an advantage, since if charity is paid every month or every week it might injure the capital, thus making the owner of the funds discontented when paying it.

In the same way, paying charity once during a lifetime is again disadvantageous to those who receive it.

Zakât is imposed on very small funds with a purpose — that is to let the majority of a nation take part in the improvement of society, thus helping to create love and friendship amongst them. Zakât is also a major factor in the distribution of wealth, and in inaugurating new industries.

Many foreign scholars have recognized the value of Zakât. Massignon says :

"Islam has within its pinciples that which makes it zealous in propagating the concept of equality, and that is the obligation of Zakât, which each individual pays to the Treasury".

Islam is against any exchange which has no restriction, and it is also against keeping wealth idle, and against usurers and indirect taxation. It supports individual ownership and commercial capital. It is halfway between the theories of Bourgeois Capitalism and Bolshovik Communism.

These are only some of the objects of Zakât, since all its objects cannot be defined.

The good that emanates from it is too extensive to delineate because it covers individual, community and state. Why should it not, when it is the system defined by God Almighty and approved by Him in the last of religions ? As for reward, that awaits all those who render it.

Thus we find that Zakât, along with all Islamic rules and observances, aims at the good of mankind in this world and its due and just recompense in the other.

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